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You Cannot Dodge Religion!

BY HAROLD BOSLEY

IN days like these when governments are either stamping out religion, or bargaining with it for its very soul, or treating it as a negligible factor, we who regard it as indispensable need to get a firmer grip on one simple fact: ethical religion roots in, and ministers to, the needs of men. The Christian religion, for example, is profoundly and aggravatingly pragmatic. It insists that the only adequate measurement of what a man says is what he does. It insists that words must be measured by works. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "If a man saith that he loveth God, yet hateth his brother, he is a liar."

Which is another way of saying that for the Christian faith the ultimate standard of values is imbedded in the very fact and process of life and must be found there, or can be found nowhere. Therefore it has constantly challenged anyone who doubted the truth of its central conviction that "God is love" to seek its validation in experimental living. For a conviction like this is infinitely broader than an object of thought; it is an invitation to a certain kind of life and, therefore, stands or falls on the basis of what happens to persons when they are living under its guidance. The deepest meanings of the Christian faith are *won* in the thick of the struggle of purposive living.

> God hath anointed thee with odorous oil
> To wrestle not to reign.

Once won in the experiences of some religious genius or group, these profound meanings soon and inevitably take on definite social patterns such as institutions, doctrines and ethical codes. What began as a religion of the spirit all too frequently has ended up as a religion of authority. What was at first glimpsed as a mystical insight is soon concretized as a doctrine. What in its inception was a warm fellowship of persons united

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by a great faith becomes an impressive church with doctrines, sacraments and priesthood.

FINDING MEANINGS BEHIND FORMS

Probably the greatest obstacle encountered in this business of inheriting a religious tradition is the fact that the most that we can inherit is the social forms of the faith. We must win through our own efforts and in our own experience the facts which underlie the forms; the meanings which created the forms, which infuse them with vitality. In other words, the vital loyalties, the life-reforming, the re-creating loyalties of religion are *learned* loyalties. Certainly they are not learned by verbal instruction whether in home, church or school. The most these institutions can do is to denote the areas of experience where such meanings have been found and bid the novitiate enter and win for himself a meaningful existence. The blessings which religion can bring to life can only be understood as the *earned rewards of experimental living*. It is not too much to say that the Alpha and Omega of the Christian faith are "Go and do" and "Well done, good and faithful servant." Not "well thought" or "well intended," but "well done."

No age has greater need than ours to come to grips with those dynamic meanings that underlie the forms of religion. Singleness of eye, clarity of insight, courage of and for great convictions—these are vanishing quantities today. And there is no reason to believe that the process of disintegration which is upon us can be effectively checked save by a recovery of these products of religious faith.

As we gird ourselves for the struggle to recover the vital meanings of religion, it is well to note that some of the earlier antagonists of religion are now happily dead. The enthusiasm for irreligion which has been so prevalent among thoughtful people during the past one hundred years has all but disappeared under the impact of the last quarter-century.

One reason for this is the plain fact that the reasons given for rejecting religion were inadequate. Religion was equated with superstition. The basic concerns of religion were thought to be irrelevant to the fundamental needs of life.

RELIGION IS INDESTRUCTIBLE

Certainly there was enough truth in these charges to justify the profound modifications of religion which they induced and which have been going on apace during the past half-century, but there was not enough truth in the charges to warrant an out-and-out rejection of religion. So we had to learn an old, old lesson, and learn it the hard way. A lesson which Whitehead condenses to this trenchant sentence: "The movement of thought is never from religion to irreligion but invariably is from one form of religion to another."

Consider what we've done, if you are tempted to dispose of Whitehead as a dealer in fancy!

When the intelligentsia of Europe and America turned their backs on traditional religion, what did they do? Did they move from religion to irreligion? Far from it! They made a religion of secularism. Now secularism, compounded as it is of boundless confidence in the goodness of man and a vigorous loyalty to science as the solution to human problems, has been and will continue to be a blessing to humanity providing its friends do not claim more for it in the realm of human values than it can deliver. But when enthusiastic supporters tried to make a religion of it; tried to expand the goodness of man until it filled the place which traditional religion assigned to the goodness of God; tried to create a reverence for the *known* and the *achieved* that literally stripped the *unknown* and the *unachieved* of that sense of mystery which is as essential to *humility* as humility is to *discovery*—when the proponents of secularism pushed its claims in these ways they went too far.

Secularism, as a religion, has taken a terrible beating at the hands of international economic and political events in the past twenty-five years. Recent developments in scientific and philosophical theory have dealt it staggering blows. It is safe to say that religion's faith in the goodness of God has never been as badly battered as secularism's faith in the goodness of man is at the present moment.

THE WORSHIP OF HALF-GODS

Other substitutes for traditional religion have been avidly sought out. New cults, or revivals of old ones, or old ones with new names have received the hopeful attention of frantic people who were seeking a stabilizing, vitalizing approach to life. We see an increasing number of our contemporaries worshiping the fierce half-gods of country, party and race. Some lines in Chesterton's "Ballad of the White Horse" describe the plight, and the threat, of worshipers of half-gods:

> Their gods were sadder than the sea,
> Gods of a wandering mill,
> Who cried for blood like beasts at night,
> Sadly, from hill to hill.

The substitutes for traditional religion have either proved so weak as to be useless, or so uncontrollably vicious as to threaten the cumulative cultural achievements of mankind. Instead of releasing and encouraging the socially creative energies of men, the substitute faiths have, without exception, impoverished, if not vitiated, those ideals and ideas by and for which men live.

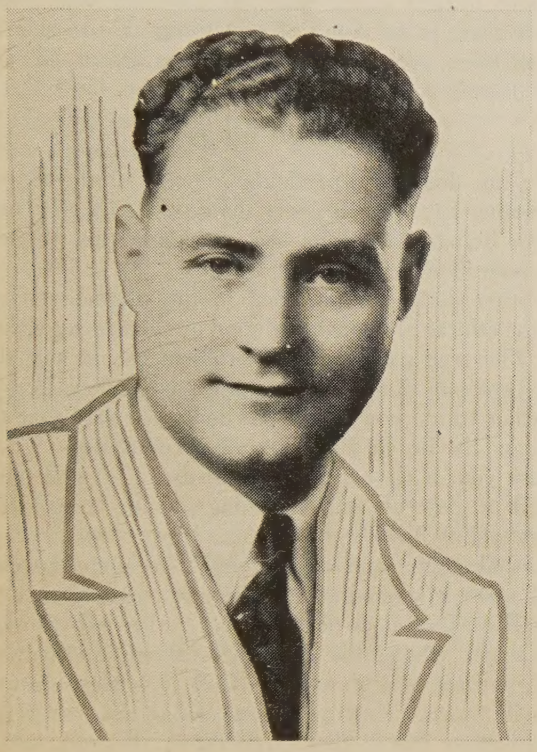
The matter, I believe, can be put this way: ours will continue to be a wistful, hungry age, religiously speaking, until and unless we come to grips with the personal and social implications of the meanings implicit in vital ethical religion. Let it be clearly understood that I am not interested in the perpetuation of any particular form or institution which these meanings have created in the past. That they will and must operate in human life through some form or other goes without saying. But forms, to be effective carriers or mediators of meaning, must literally be adapted to the changing needs of an evolving or changing scene.

But in carefully noting this fact we are brought face to face with another and deeper fact—one which is our primary concern just now. He who thoughtlessly

dodges the forms of religion also dodges the meanings that are implicit in them. Herein lies the tragedy: when we miss those meanings we miss the meaning of life itself.

We can dodge the church, as so many of us do, but we cannot dodge our need for the meaning which brought it into existence, and which has been the breath of life to it through the ages.

The forms of the church are diverse and transitory. Students of history are well acquainted with the significant developments in its growth. They tell the fascinating story of how the church began with small groups meeting in one another's homes in the Graeco-



HAROLD BOSLEY

Roman world, yet grew through the centuries until it became an impressive institution whose leaders could look the proud rulers of great empires squarely in the eye and not give way. Also, how this early church with its creed a single powerful sentence, "Jesus is Lord," and not more than two sacraments, and no well defined leadership, grew through clearly traceable stages until it evolved a compendious theology, and seven sacraments, and a powerfully knit hierarchy of leaders. Also, how reform movements kept arising within the church; some staying within while others broke away and set up housekeeping for themselves. This process of division has surrounded us with the rich diversity of forms which spreads about us today.

EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH THE SHARED LIFE

But we must not let the known facts of mutability and diversity in the church blind us to the enduring meaning which brings churches into existence; which modifies them when their arrogance leads them to forget that they are means and not ends in the universe.

And that enduring meaning is this: *the shared life is an experience of God.* The church and its symbols celebrate mutuality as an ultimate fact in life. The church is dedicated to the belief that fellowship, so far from being either incidental or accidental in life, is a sacred ingredient of it.

The social sciences have only recently been demonstrating the soundness of this ancient insight. It is no longer open to question that fellowship is essential to personal growth and health. The very self that is the core of our personality is won in the thick of social experience, is a precipitate of living and working with other persons. Fellowship, mutuality, cooperation—these are equally essential to the development of any given society. There was a time when religion thought she could do without science, and vice-versa. Our culture resounded with the strenuous conflict which ensued before these great disciplines of life were able to realize that they were equally essential to an enduring social order. Caught up as our day is in vicious sectional, racial and religious struggles, we sense the tragic truth once more: mutuality, a cooperation which recognizes yet subordinates differences to the achievement of central and common goals, is essential to social health.

OLD FORMS, ENDURING MEANINGS

The religious meaning which is implicit in the church bids us first consecrate to God what we would share with our fellows. If it is of such a nature that we cannot conscientiously consecrate it to God, then, without doubt, it will harm rather than help, not alone him who receives it, but equally us who give it. But if we can consecrate it to God, then, by all means, let us share it. Share it whether it be a cup of cold water; or food, shelter, and an opportunity to do socially useful work; or great causes which languish for lack of our loyalties. For in the act of sharing the fact of God comes alive in our hearts and truly lives.

We can dodge the church, I say, but we cannot dodge our deep and abiding need for that consecrated fellowship which it celebrates as the breath of life to man and society alike.

Then, too, we can adopt the current fashion of dodging theology, but here again we cannot dodge the fact that we must be able to give a rational statement of why we do what we do. Now I grant you that theology is practically embalmed in a vocabulary that sounds strange to modern ears. And it isn't difficult to understand why this is so when we realize that the forms of theological expression originated a long time ago and have only recently been getting sufficient attention to encourage their translation into contemporary vocabulary. But the enduring meaning of theology—*that there is a Purpose in Life sufficiently dynamic and comprehensive to induce purposive living in daily behavior*—that meaning states a need that is coextensive with human life.

Theology began when man first discovered that he was up against some unalterable facts. When he saw that the values of life had a certain "givenness" about them to which he had to conform if he would know

them, he stood in awe before them. Though we may not pray for rain as did primitive man when he desired water on his fields, we stand in equal dependence upon the fact that any definite pattern of growth involves the interaction of definite elements in uniform ways. When we see, as we must, that friendship, loyalty, love and work are components of the good life, and that we cannot command these values, but can only conform to them if we would experience them, then we see the inevitability of theology.

Theology invades your life when you search for a greater measure of truth, beauty, goodness or love. He was a wise as well as famous scientist who when asked by students why he did what he did, replied, "That there may be greater harmony and order in life." Those hours on end in the laboratory through twenty-five years; a quarter of a century of squinting through microscopes, inventing gadgets, puzzling over results in researches in physical theory—all this "that there may be greater harmony and order in life." There's a creed for you, regardless of your actual or potential profession, and it is as closely related to theology as the embryo of the child is to the full-blown personality it will become.

IS THERE A PURPOSE IN LIFE?

Personal effort, does it count? Who of us can avoid asking and answering that question today? Lost as we are in the immensity of the cosmos, submerged as we feel under the pressure of billions of persons on the face of the earth, caught up and flung along by fantastic and fateful circumstances as we seem to be—do we dare to ask or dare we refrain from asking whether there is purpose in life? One of the greatest dramatists of our day who consistently trys to "hold a mirror up to nature," including man, that we may see ourselves as we are, confronts one of his agents with the multiform and inexorable character of life. She cries out, "Teach me to be an atom!" An atom? A blind, insensate entity swirled hither and yon by laws within and without, devoid of all sense of responsibility and hence of all notion of moral worth—that isn't *life* as it floods through us and our world. We are closer to the heart of its meaning in the reverent reaction of a young woman who, looking out on the same facts which caused one to pray to be an atom, said: "I never cease marveling at the fact that the God of the universe can use even me!" She found a purpose for living the only way we can find it—*in causes that are real when and only when they arise from human need.* Note that relationship: purpose arises from causes and these in turn from needs that simply take possession of our loyalties and abilities. Theology roots in and is forever answerable to the daily facts of concrete human problems. Only by keeping this clearly in mind can we avoid one of the worst of all dodges around theology, yet one which too many contemporary thinkers are trying to take. I refer to the recourse to metaphysics in search of purpose for life.

Metaphysics, considering as it does the basic categories of reality, is manifestly essential to any sound theology—this much I am prepared not so much to admit as to affirm. But I must likewise insist upon this one corollary: metaphysics without theology is a dispensable luxury. For theology relates the first principles of reality to the problems of life which must be solved, if they are ever to be solved, in terms of what is fundamentally true of the world. Theology attempts to focus metaphysics upon concrete human needs in such a way that the illumination of eternal values will provide a light whereby men may see to work upon their problems. The great doctrines of the Christian tradition—of God, Christ, man, sin and salvation—what are these but ways which men in preceding generations have evolved to explain that an eternal purpose threads every day and utilizes every effort of your life and mine! Where there is no vision of something akin to this we and all other people will perish in the deserts of cynicism, despair and aimlessness.

WE ARE EN ROUTE!

We can dodge the particular phrases of theology if we choose, but we can never dodge the fact that purpose in living flows from the conviction that there is a purpose in life.

Another dodge is contained in the common charge that the ethical precepts of religion are hopelessly visionary. The true nature of the problem can be put this way: we can dodge the revolutionary character of Christian ethics, but we cannot dodge the fact that the abundant life lies in that direction or nowhere.

I ask you, is it perfectionism to dream of and move toward a day of understanding among men? An understanding based upon a mutual respect for personal and social rights and obligations? An understanding based upon a sympathetic cooperation among men; a mutuality which does not blur, but rather subordinates to a larger whole, the differences among individuals, races, natures and churches? Call it perfectionist, if you will; nevertheless we cannot dodge the simple fact that progress lies in that direction or the very nature of progress must itself be abandoned and we become content to dwell in the swamps and morasses where now we live.

The philosophic validation of the directional thrust of Christian ethics can be conveyed in a single sentence. We are *en route,* cosmically speaking. Life has moved along the pathway from a unicellular amoeba to a multicellular man. Though there is high dispute as to the how, when and why of this development, any protest against the fact labels itself as rearguard action. Behind us stretches a long animal ancestry in which we lived by the ethic of the jungle. Ahead of us lies the possibility of becoming sons of God, cooperators together with him in the creation of a Kingdom of God. Shall we go backward or forward?

YOU CANNOT DODGE RELIGION!

Life is a possession to be used, a wealth to be invested in the achievement of some goal. It finds its meaning in doing. Whatever characteristics it assumes are defined in terms of action. The poet Sandburg sees the crowbar at work in the leveling of broken down, useless buildings in order to make way for new and

useful ones. "Make me a crowbar, O God," he prays. A crowbar to raze the old and vicious prejudices, the inherited injustices and inequities, the fear-infested ideals and institutions of selfishness and greed. Let us pray to be an instrument in God's hands, an instrument that finds its worth in doing his will.

You can dodge the perfectionist character of the Sermon on the Mount if you will, but you cannot dodge the fact that the direction for living which it indicates is the hope of the world.

You cannot dodge religion. If you do, meaning fades out of life. Fellowship, purpose, work—these are the fundamental concerns of religion because they are the basic needs of life. You dare not dodge religion. When you confront the meanings which it carries, you find in them the authority of a personal challenge that only the hopelessly negligent or cowardly will try to evade. For they bring an invitation to live a life worth living, to fling ourselves and all that we have on the altar of God's will. The creative Spirit of the universe broods over us, one and all, as we plumb the depths of our need, and that Spirit whispers, "I seek not yours but you!" "This do and thou shalt live."

The Unburied Dead

By Paul Lee Sturges

THE newspapers of the middle west not long ago proclaimed in bold headlines that the Grave Diggers of Kansas City, Missouri, had gone on a strike. The city was experiencing the unusual—the dead were not being buried. Facts revealed that large numbers of bodies were in storage awaiting someone to inter them. One was reminded of the strange statement of Jesus: "Let the dead bury their dead."

The prospective disciple who approached Jesus had carefully weighed the demands of discipleship. He was willing to follow, and to pay the full price for so doing, but he had an obligation he felt he must first fulfill. According to the custom of the day he should stay at home until his father died that he, the son, might give him a correct burial. Were he allowed first to bury his father, he would gladly answer the challenge of Jesus.

By his curt answer, "Let the dead bury the dead," Jesus implied the truth which is to form the basis of our consideration—that a man may be ever so physically active, yet be without what Jesus calls life. A man may be able to bury the dead even when he himself is among those who do not possess life.

Frequently in his ministry, Jesus spoke of bringing life to people. He stated his life's purpose as, "I came that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." In the Gospel of John, he is reported to have cried, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Once he spoke of a man "passing from death unto life." Referring to the deed of the Good Samaritan, Jesus admonished the scribe, "This do and thou shalt live." The Prodigal Son, about whom Jesus told, returned home to hear his father exhort his brother, "My son was dead and is alive."

If someone is protesting that in these passages Jesus was talking about eternal life, we reply that indeed he was! But what did Jesus mean by eternal life? An existence which begins at physical death? Jesus never made a clear-cut distinction between life here and life hereafter. Eternal life to him was a qualitative existence, which may begin here and now. Do you consider that the rich young ruler who came to Jesus inquiring what he must do "to inherit eternal life" was thinking in terms of a post-mortem existence? Not at all. Young men, with their future before them, usually are not concerned about life after death. This young man wanted the life which obviously was in Jesus. The Master, he had discovered, was gloriously, vitally alive; so much so, in fact, that he himself in contrast was without life. He was among the dead.

Therefore, when Jesus commanded, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead," he was alluding to the death of the spirit. Let those whose souls were aglow with life follow him; those without life bury their fathers.

With this truth before us consider some of the symptoms of spiritual death. The evidences of physical death are too marked for us to mistake them. It is not always so of the death of the spirit. Perhaps, speaking truthfully, none of us are fully alive, nor altogether without life. Evidences of both life and death, in varying degree, may be discerned in everyone.

I

The first symptom of the death of an individual's spirit is an insensibility to the world of faith. A man in this condition is numb to God's great imponderables. He lives by that which he can see, touch, prove; he merely exists—by bread alone.

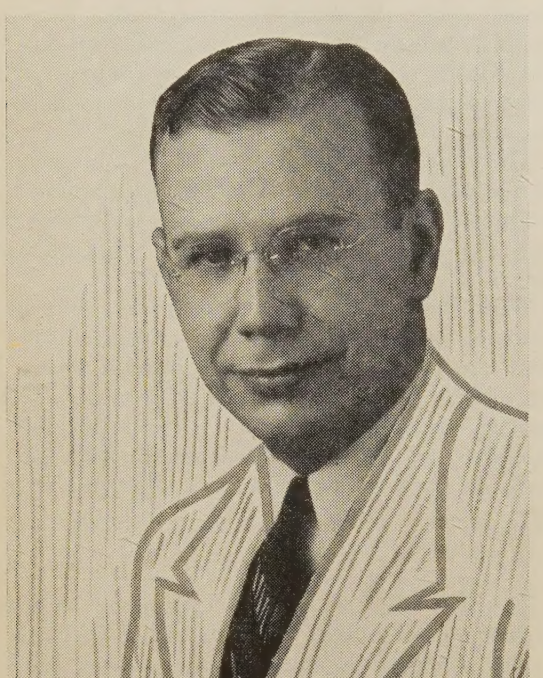
When applied to the intellectual world, we can readily understand this truth. Surely the world of the intellect surrounds countless numbers of people who never suspect it, to say nothing of responding to it. Because of this world and what it offers, some may find their pulse quickened and themselves prompted to spontaneous effort. They may open their eyes to the light as it shines upon them, and in eagerly following it, they may pass from the darkness of the nonintellectual into the light of the life intellectual. But the insensitive see not, nor respond. They remain in the dark and forever they are dead to that life.

This is true also of the aesthetic world. Even when the beauty of the hill and the valley, or the majesty of the mountain and sea are open to the gaze, or the joys of noble music are offered—experiences of beauty which to many bring an answering thrill and sense of peace and joy—some remain uninspired and unmoved. They are not alive to such a world.

It is just as true of the world of faith. Pompey, we are told, entered Jerusalem in triumph. To make his victory all the more dramatic, he did the most blasphemous deed possible to the mind of the Jew. Swaggering into the temple, he boldly threw the curtain

back and entered into the sacred "holy of holies." Into that precious room the high priests through the years had entered alone to meet God face to face. There, of all places on earth to the Jew, God was most present. But Pompey saw merely an empty room. Having charged in, he came as abruptly out, muttering, "There is nothing there." Of course, there was nothing there for Pompey. He was dead to the Unseen, whose fellowship for years had been felt by the priests in that room.

To many, the stars reveal nothing; but to the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God." To some, a tree is merely bark, pulp and leaves; but to a Joyce Kilmer it is a revelation of the glory of God's



Paul Lee Sturges

creation. To hosts of people a flower in a crannied wall is just a flower, but to a Tennyson it is a revelation of the deepest spirit in life. Some see only burning bushes, but a Moses sees and hears God. Some see only the bare walls of the temple, but an Isaiah sees "The Lord high and lifted up."

To the sensitive there is in this world, "A sense sublime . . . a motion and a spirit that impels."

The waves of the sea waft the message of God's ceaseless love, the forests exhale his peace; the flowers reveal his beauty, the smile of a little child, his purity and joy. To them the life of the supreme love, the love of him who is ready to lay down life itself, is the manifestation of God in the flesh. They are truly alive. "This is life eternal that they might know thee and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

But they who see only stars, only wood and pulp; they who see only a defeated man upon a cross, and find nothing in the world or in the life and death of the Christ which leads them to look up and beyond, to spend and be spent—they are among the dead. Is that not clearly what Jesus meant in this passage under consideration? Let those who are not quickened by the revelation of my life; the numb, with no quiver of emotion as they consider my challenge to them and to the world—let them inter the fathers.

II

Another symptom of spiritual death is an insensibility to the needs and rights of others. This though naturally follows the first, because Jesus joined them in his great statement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God—and thy neighbor as thyself."

We say a man is physically dead when his heart stops beating. Is not a man spiritually dead when there is no heart throb? "My soul, thou hast much good laid up in store for many years; take thine ease, eat drink and be merry." According to Jesus' account God said: "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee." We may be uncertain whether physical death overtook the man that night, but there should be no doubt in our minds about spiritual death overcoming him. A paralysis of the spirit creeps over any man who seeks to live for himself alone, who ignores his obligation to society and to the deeper needs of mankind.

How frequently the scripture account records that Jesus had "compassion on the multitude." His heart bled with and for mankind. Whosoever did anything unto the least of them, his brethren, did it unto him. If a child was harmed, he himself was injured in that act.

Most assuredly the consciences of many, in all walks of life, have a blunt edge. Oh! 'tis true, they may pity others. They may even confess their sympathy for the welfare of others—until their interest begins to cost something. We should take heart at the progress already made in the present labor situation. But there are still too many employers who exploit their workmen, without a sense of shame; still too many employees concerned merely with their own rights and entirely insensitive to the problems of their employer. We submit that this callousness is an evidence of death.

The writer of the first epistle of John sums it up unmistakably: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

III

The third and final symptom of such a death is an insensibility to the great interests of life. One must constantly ask of himself and of others: For what are we living? What is our dominant purpose in life? In what interests larger than ourselves are we losing ourselves? For you may be sure that those of us who live for that which moth and rust can consume, will ourselves be consumed. Unless we are bound to causes worth dying for, we ourselves are among the dying. We are alive only as we live for that which will eternally live.

We may have been prone to think that Jesus was severe in his demands: "Let the dead bury their dead

which meant, for the disciple, the giving up of his obligation to bury his father; but Jesus was making clear that nothing in life should take the place of man's first obedience—loyalty to the great call of the kingdom. As worthy of support as other interests may be, what the Master represented is the all-important cause to which one should give his devotion. A man is alive—and will continue to live—only as he seeks first that kingdom.

Here lies the reason many of us are serving the church. In doing so, it is true we are forced to make excuses for the institution. We grow impatient with her at times. We see her weaknesses, as only those who are on the inside can. We know that she is too inert; and, at times, too cowardly to shoulder the cross in our day, as her Master took up the cross in his day. Even so, with all of her weaknesses, the church is the foremost creative force in society today. The best, the most community-minded, the most generous people are in the church. Take the influence of the church out of the community and you will witness a decline in community consciousness, in the spirit of brotherhood—and also a decline in business. Community organizations of one form or another grew originally out of the church, and today, their very existence depends upon the spirit generated in the hearts and minds of the people by the church. We believe, therefore, that we can serve the cause of Christ most vitally by giving to that church the best that we have in time, money and talent. Until the day comes when some other method of promoting the Master's cause outstrips the church, we shall give our best to further its work. We seek to live by losing our life in Christ's cause.

Some of us are afraid of physical death. The real death to fear is that of the spirit. He who is truly alive, who is sensitive to God, to the needs and rights of those about him, and to the great interests of life has no need to fear what we commonly call death. It will be a door through which we will enter into an expanded life offering greater opportunities of living and aspiring. Let us, therefore, give ourselves to the urgency of possessing life, the life which, received through the guidance of the spirit of Christ, will be abundant and eternally enriching.

Young Ministers Number

THIS Young Ministers Number is of particular interest because it contains selected sermons from many manuscripts submitted without solicitation by the authors.

It therefore represents the normal message and style of the younger ministers of today.

THE EDITORS

Let the Church and Christianity Get Together!

BY STANLEY I. STUBER

On coming there [at Antioch] he [that is, Barnabas] saw to his great joy these tokens of the loving-kindness of God, and encouraged them all to make up their minds to be faithful to the Lord—for Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith—and a large number of people took their stand on the Lord's side. Acts 11:23,24.

THE church and Christianity are not the same. They often are drawn far apart; sometimes one is set against the other in moral and in spiritual combat.

The church is an organization through which the spirit, the power, the way of life called "Christianity," is meant to flow. It is man-made; one can set the date of its physical birth, trace its development throughout history; note its successes and mistakes. It is even possible to count the members who belong to this church.

With Christianity it is far different. No one knows just when the spirit and way of life which we now call "Christianity" came into the world. It had its fulfillment in Christ, yet the saints, religious pioneers, prophets were of its kingdom. Living principles, and not written creeds, form the basis of its program. Truth, justice and love, rather than dogmas, rites and ceremonies, comprise its ritual of life. Only God knows who the real Christian is.

The great need of our time is to draw these two—church and Christianity—nearer together.

RE-EXAMINING THE CHURCHES

At some points they are far, far apart. The stress placed upon various sacraments, the divisions termed "denominations," the requirements for membership, the moral and spiritual program of the two, just now, are at odds with each other. In fact, sometimes the earthly, man-made, fallible church has gone its own separate way, ignoring the very principles which it is supposed, as the distributing agency of Christianity, to foster in a sinful world.

Our task today is to re-examine our churches, and the great institution which we think of as "the church," in order that we may reform, reshape the institution in order that it may the better serve as the true and open channel through which the grace of God can flow to heal the many hurts and sins of men.

I know of no better way to determine what the true church should be like than to investigate with care the first Gentile Christian church. What was this first church like? What kind of people belonged to it? For what did they stand? How did they act? This church which had no creeds, no New Testament, no ecclesiastical orders, no denominational affiliation, ac-

tually gets us back to the point where Christianity and the church are very close together; where they, in truth, represent and serve exactly the same spirit and cause. I refer, of course, to the church at Antioch, the members of which were first, in the course of history, to be called "Christians."

THE CITY OF ANTIOCH

If we should go to Antioch today we would find only another of the many Eastern towns. Although the French rule it under a mandate, the city is Turkish and Turkish speech, customs and colors prevail. The sunshine lying over its desolate hillsides, and the hills themselves, are the only things left to remind one of Antioch "the Beautiful and the Golden," which now lies buried deep beneath this present typical small city of the East.

When Barnabas and Paul went there, about 44 A.D., to work with the first Gentile church, it was the third largest city in the world—next to Rome and Alexandria. It was the Paris of the East. It was noted for its race courses, famous theaters, baths, thousands of marble columns, countless statues, fountains, temples and market places.

The Antioch of 44 A.D. does not represent so much the culture and achievements of ancient times as it does the spirit and attitudes of a modern city like Hollywood. Here there "was a worship of the material achievements of life and the sensory attributes of riches, such as central heating, swimming pools, plumbing and flood-lighting." Its main street stretched four and a half miles, with a central passage for horse traffic and chariots, and two covered colonnades for foot-passengers. In every respect it was a most modern city!

According to H. V. Morton, in his book, *In The Steps of St. Paul,* "When night fell, this enormous city was picked out with thousands of lights in order that the business of Antioch, which was enjoyment, might continue as if it were still day. . . . It was up-to-date, amusing, elegant, wicked; and its epigrams could go a long way to make or ruin a reputation. The ridiculous quarrels which centered round the racing stables of Antioch were known throughout the world. . . . The People has a genius for coining nicknames. . . . Their passion for the theater and race-course was proverbial. When they were not watching games, they were talking about the performers. The city was consequently packed with jockeys and tipsters, mediums, dancers, actors and professional athletes. The music halls and theaters offered a natural start in life to the dancers of Caesarea, the flute players of the Lebanon, the actors of Tyre, the wrestlers of Ascalon, and the musicians of Gaza; while the renowned boxers of Castabala, and the jockeys for which Laodicea was famous, were only too happy to make long journeys for the privilege of an audition in a city whose approval was half way to a career."

REFUGEES IN ANTIOCH

Renan adds that "it was an inconceivable medley of mountebanks, quacks, buffoons, magicians, miracle mongers, sorcerers, false priests; a city of races, games, dances, processions, fêtes, revels of unbridled luxury of all the follies of the East, of the most unhealthy superstitions, and of the fanaticism of the orgy."

Such was the Antioch which gave the Christian refugees from Jerusalem shelter and a home—scientific, materialistic, pleasure-mad, wealthy and cosmopolitan.

We learn in chapter 11 of the Acts of the Apostles verses 19-30, that as the result of the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, a great many followers of the Man of Galilee had been scattered in different directions. Some went to Phoenicia, others to Cyprus, and others to Antioch and they went, it should be stressed, telling the Message. Persecution could not stop the testimony of these first disciples! At the beginning this Message was given only to Jews, and Jews of foreign birth (Hellenists), in the synagogues which were to be found in all Roman cities. Soon, however, they began to tell the Good News to the Gentiles, to the heathen, to the foreigners. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit they had broken through their national, religious and racial bonds and boundaries, taking the spirit and principles of the Master to those who were not Jews. Perhaps without realizing it, they had taken one of the most important steps—if not the most important one—in all Christian history.

On hearing this, the orthodox, careful, fearful Jewish-Christian church at Jerusalem, which had somehow escaped the persecution, or was the remnant of the persecution, sent Barnabas up to Antioch to investigate such heresy and irregularities. "On coming there he saw to his great joy these tokens of the loving-kindness of God, and encouraged them all to make up their minds to be faithful to the Lord—for Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith—and a large number of people took their stand on the Lord's side."

THE GREATNESS OF BARNABAS

The Jewish-Christian church at Jerusalem had selected one of the greatest men of the first century church to investigate affairs at Antioch. Renan says: "He was the most enlightened member of the church at Jerusalem, the chief of the liberal party which desired progress and wished the church to be open to all. . . . Christianity has always done injustice to that great man in not placing him in the front rank of her founders."

I certainly feel the same way about this. Barnabas was a great-souled man. One of the most interesting conjectures of the Christian church is whether or not we would have ever heard from Paul, whether or not Paul would have set out on his great missionary journeys, whether or not we would have had a Western church such as we know today, if it had not been for Barnabas.

You will remember that after Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus, and his escape from his enemies in that city, he went to Jerusalem. But he was feared and hated in Jerusalem: feared because he had not long before been a fierce persecutor; hated because he had deserted the cause of the Pharisees. These dramat

facts are vividly recorded in the book of Acts, chapter 9 and verses 26-30:

> On his arrival in Jerusalem, Saul attempted to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. . . . Barnabas, however, taking him by the hand, brought him to the Apostles, and told them the whole story. . . . After that, Saul remained in Jerusalem . . . and he spoke fearlessly in the Name of the Lord. . . . The Jews of foreign birth, however, made attempts to kill him. But, when the Brethren found this out, they took him down to Caesarea, and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

After ten years, silent years which Paul spent in Tarsus, Barnabas once again set out to take Paul by

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the hand and lead him, this time, to the place where he knew he could do his best work—to missionary-minded Antioch. He was willing to take second place to Paul for the sake of Christ. Just as he saw hope in the church at Antioch, so he saw a new Christian era in Paul.

It would pay the church greatly if it would only rethink its history and purpose in terms of the first Gentile church, rather than imitating the narrow, nationalistic, dogmatic Jewish-Christian church at Jerusalem. If we must imitate ancient forms and ceremonies, as practiced by some original church, why do we not copy the church which was liberal in its policy, social in its point of view, and missionary in action?

For centuries we have built our churches around the organization of the ultraconservative church at Jerusalem. The time has now come when the churches, if they would serve in the years to come, must imitate the spirit of the first century church at Antioch and make its purpose its own. If the church and Christianity are to be brought into a working harmony, daring prophets and realistic Christian teachers must be accepted and honored, as well as priests and ecclesiastical executives. This is what the church at Antioch did.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH

It is a fascinating study to look beneath the surface of this church, under the personal leadership of Paul and Barnabas, and note its attitudes, spirit, progress and achievements. Let me list a few of these, as I discover them in the book of Acts:

1. They were faithful churchgoers. (11:26)
2. They believed in a teaching, as well as a preaching, ministry. (11:26)
3. They lived so near Christ that they came to be known as "Christians." (11:26)
4. The Holy Spirit was their strength and guide. (11:21)
5. Acceptance of the Way of Christ was the only requirement for church membership. (11:21)
6. There was unity of purpose. (11:29)
7. They were socially-minded. (11:29)
8. The Antioch church was not afraid to have prophets; in fact it was proud of them, supporting and encouraging them. (13:1)
9. It was a missionary-minded, and a missionary-active church, sending out its very best men as missionaries. (13:2-5)
10. It was a loyal, persistent church, always maintaining and striving to be true to its original purpose and aim. (15:1-4)

This history of the original Gentile church ought to set our minds to working, and our hearts to beating fast! What a challenge it still offers! A fellowship not held together by ecclesiastical pressure, denominational prejudice or peculiar bigotries, but by a loyalty, a devotion and an unselfish service, to the Lord. Here creeds, dogmas, rites were not supreme, but the love and spirit of Christ! In this first Gentile church there is much which we today need to copy.

This brings us directly back to our text, words of counsel which Barnabas gave to this 44 A.D. church: ". . . he was delighted, and encouraged them to be resolute and steadfast in their devotion to the Lord." (Goodspeed)

PERILS OF OVERORGANIZATION

Barnabas was glad! glad to discover the love of God under new forms, and in so strange a location as wealthy, wicked Antioch! Instead of being bewildered with this sudden turn of events, which seemed so destructive to the most profound convictions of the church at Jerusalem, he saw in it God's hand and will, and encouraged this creative church to push forward in the same direction in which it had started. He trusted the Holy Spirit more than the rules and regulations of the elders at Jerusalem. And let us thank God that he did! He chose to support Christian life, rather than church doctrine; Christ, rather than organization.

This vital decision led the great English preacher

of a generation ago, Alexander Maclaren, to say: "We spend much pains and effort nowadays in perfecting our organizations and consolidating our resources, and I have not a word to say against that. But heavier machinery needs more power in the engine, and that means greater capacity in your boilers and more fire in your furnace. The more complete our organization, the more do we need a firm hold of Christ, or we shall be overweighted by it, shall be in danger of burning incense to our own net, shall be tempted to trust in drill rather than in courage, in mechanism rather than in the life drawn from Christ."

If we are to bring the church and Christianity nearer and nearer together, this is what we must do—"be resolute and steadfast in our devotion to the Lord." He comes first! He is what matters most! And, as we put his kingdom first of all in our lives, in our church, then the other things shall be added, as promised, each in its proper place and turn. For

> Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Yes; the Lord is more, much more, than church, dogma, ritual, creed, denomination. He is Christianity. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life!

If Christian people, the world over, by the millions, would only believe this! If Christians in this country would only act upon this basis! What a difference it would make in our churches, in our denominations, in our missionary organizations. Then there would be a will, even a demand, for church unity; then there would be equality at the Lord's Table and an exchange of members among the churches on a basis of Christlikeness, and not theology and petty formalism.

NOT JERUSALEM, BUT ANTIOCH!

Now let us be perfectly frank with ourselves and ask: Which represents the spirit and teachings of the Master: the church at Jerusalem, or the church at Antioch?

The answer, once we have read the book of Acts, is obvious. At Antioch, under the leadership of Paul and Barnabas, his spirit and his principles were given free expression. Strange as it may seem, it was in pagan Antioch, and not in religious Jerusalem, that the church and Christianity were brought together into a working unity.

With a freshness, a vitality, a courage, a daring which broke through class, color and creed, through race and nationality, the Master's spirit started here its march around the world. It began in a church, and it should continue in, and through, the church. But let us, as church members, realize this: The church and Christianity are united only when we stand by the Lord steadfastly; only when we put the Lord first in our lives and first in our church.

Barnabas still encourages us: "Remain, with fixed resolve, faithful to the Lord."

If we do this we shall not merely be called "church members," but "Christians"!

The Church Must Live Its Heritage!

By Howard J. Conn

IT is widely reported that people have recently been going to church and thinking on religious matters with renewed interest. Last year ministers in all sections of the country reported the largest Lenten and Easter attendances in many years. The ecumenical conference of the world-wide Christian Church at Oxford focused attention on the essential unity of the Christian message at a time when people were becoming aware of a desperate spiritual need, and it is entirely possible that we may be at the beginning of a great spiritual awakening not known since the days of Jonathan Edwards.

But if men and women are looking to the church for help and guidance, the church can fail them only at extreme peril. We may rejoice to see the pews filled, but we must humbly pray that the message of the Lord be presented in such compelling fashion that the people will be changed. If our unchurched neighbors come to listen, they must be so touched that they will remain to worship.

What then has the church to offer men and women who today turn to it for light? The church is the custodian of a past tradition; to it has been committed "a pearl of great price"; and to the modern generation it presents this "goodly heritage" conserved in the three aspects of its own historic past, the sacred Scripture, and the gospel of Christ.

We can save the world by no novelty of preaching or streamlining of message. We believe that the fault with the present age is not a failure to discover new values but backsliding in the appreciation of old values. The church therefore offers its goodly heritage, and commends the instruction once given to the youthful Timothy: "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep, by the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us."

Yet there are two difficulties we must acknowledge in preaching this goodly heritage.

THE PRESENT ATTITUDE TOWARD TRADITION

In the first place, the unchurched moderns who may be turning to religion are not basically interested in the past. They don't care what happened a thousand or more years ago. They don't care whether Elijah heard the Lord in the earthquake or the still, small voice; but they do want to know what the Lord expects of them tomorrow. The only heritage from the past that would interest many of them would be a legacy of a few thousand dollars from Aunt Susan's will. They therefore want something new and practical.

We can understand this attitude in part. We ourselves do not come to church as archaeologists with an antiquarian interest in the past, but as men and women seeking a light to guide us through the trying problems that face us day by day.

But we must make our friends realize that from the

past our greatest help will come, and that from the goodly heritage of the Christian faith we gain inspiration for the present. There is a real past that is never dead but a very vital factor in human experience. A physician who treats the body must bring the past learning as a part of his skill; the scientist must follow principles long since formulated; the explorer must proceed from the findings of earlier expeditions. In every field our adventure into the future is made through reliance on our heritage from the past. The notion that we can make an absolutely fresh beginning is false, and we therefore do well to make sure that our heritage be a goodly one.

Outward forms change, but the church affirms values that are timeless. The fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace—are as real today as when the children of Israel hung their harps by the waters of Babylon; the quest for the abundant life is no more intense now than when Jesus on a crowded hillside spoke of the qualities of a blessed life.

The church must meet the first hurdle by showing that tradition is not a past to be forgotten but a heritage to be remembered. It must show clearly that the problems of the modern world arise precisely because men have failed to practice those virtues which the church teaches. We must repeat the remark that Christianity has not been tried and discarded, but has yet to be tried sincerely.

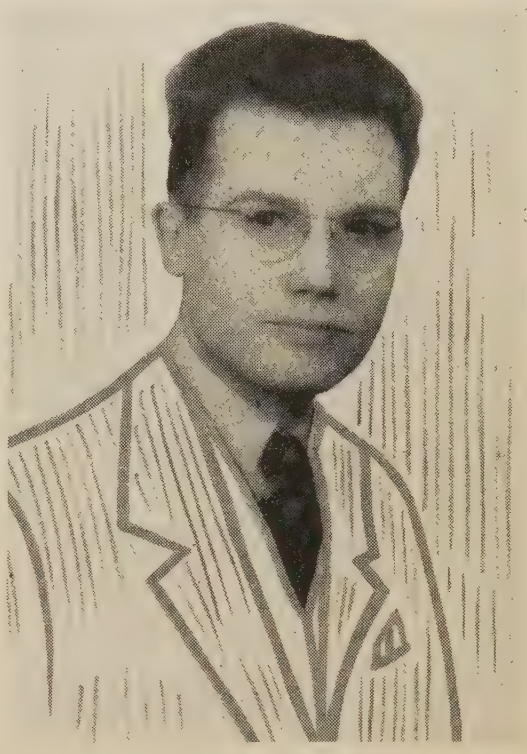
INTERPRETING THE PAST FOR TODAY'S NEED

The second difficulty in preaching the goodly heritage is a temptation to which the faithful must not yield. We must not be antiquarians in a strict insistence on the very letter of our heritage. We must distinguish between an appeal to tradition which is only a desire to perpetuate a status quo in which we happen to be the favored few, and the regard for heritage which is a reaffirmation of those basic principles of living which are valid in any age.

There would, for example, be no spiritual nourishment from a lengthy discussion of the identity of the particular mountain to which Elijah fled after his conflict with the prophets of Baal. That is a matter of Palestinian geography and Israelite history that does not affect modern living. But there is a great deal to be learned from considering the thoughts of Elijah at that time, and the type of experience in which he found his communion with the Almighty. For people today are discouraged in their loyalties to truth and want to know whether to seek divine reinforcement in the noise of earthquake or the calm hours of contemplation.

We must always interpret the phraseology of the past in the language of today, we must rethink the doctrines that are given to us, and we must distinguish in any tradition that which was ancient folklore and that which is eternal truth. If we make a wholesale appropriation of the past without intelligent thought, we destroy the very value of that tradition to speak its eternal message to our specific problems. We are not concerned with Elijah for himself but for what his experience teaches us regarding similar instances.

A regard for the heritage of the past, then, must not fear change. It must recognize that there is a relevant contemporary factor which is forever changing. It must be willing to see social and political systems change, it must accept new patterns of thought, it must recognize specific events that are entirely new. Its sole regard must be that through these inevitable changes the fundamental values shine more clearly from generation to generation. Were the prophet Elijah to come alive today he would find striking changes from the political monarchies he knew, from the costumes he wore, from the language he spoke. And if he were to preach to you and me that we retain the goodly



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heritage he would care not one whit that we return to his politics, his dress or his language, but he would be passionately insistent that through whatever systems we now use we retain the basic virtues of righteousness and loyalty to the Lord God of Hosts.

WHERE REGARD FOR THE PAST IS PERILOUS

A respect for the past must not be an excuse for everything that exists. The destruction of the Russian church, for example, was essential to the perpetuation of the Christian heritage, because that church was so clogged as a political and economic institution that it killed the spiritual life it professed to be perpetuating. The setback which religion has met under the communists is, of course, regrettable, but our desire for religion in Russia is not a wish that a throttling church be reestablished, but that a new church be created through which the timeless spiritual values may be encouraged among the Russian people. We need the church, but not for itself; we need the church as the

fit vehicle of individual and social spiritual growth.

Josephine W. Johnson, the young poet, has these lines:

> Blind is that shepherd who would lead his sheep
> Back to these steer-trampled waters!

This might seem to disparage any reverence for the goodly heritage, were it not clear from other poems that what she condemns is not the waters themselves but those temporary institutions and ideas and verbal thought-patterns which have been so outmoded that they no longer hold fresh water. The need for life-giving water is still genuine. Miss Johnson's regard for the real values of past tradition is apparent from another poem called "The Quiet Flower":

> But there is the need of silence, deep, undying,
> The need to be still, to turn and go
> Back to a quiet acre in the hills, and there,
> Small and alone beneath the arch of night,
> Wash in a cold lake underneath the stars.
> . . . . .
> Turn back to this quiet acre in the night,
> And find the cold petals of that pristine star
> Which, alone and immaculate and white,
> Blossoms beyond the temporal hour.

That is a need basic in the life of every individual, and religion calls to men and women today to return from their scattered and hectic activities to moments of quiet contemplation of those truths which blossom beyond any temporal hour.

ETERNAL VALUES IN OUR HERITAGE—THE CHURCH

The church must meet this second hurdle by refusing to be blind and soft in its insistence on the past, and by setting forth clearly what are the eternal values in its goodly heritage.

There are three aspects of this goodly heritage. The first is the historic church itself.

A member of a luncheon club was being congratulated for working for a company that was celebrating its hundredth anniversary. The chairman asked if any man present was connected with an older concern. A minister stood up. Everyone laughed until they realized in all seriousness that the Church of Christ is an institution that has been organized and operating for nineteen hundred years. If we take pride in the record of commercial companies "founded in 1888" or "established in 1796," why not rejoice more in the historic tradition of the church?

And this past is actually a very vital force. If a group of people banded themselves together to form a "Middletown Improvement Society," and if they took as their aim all the worthy goals imaginable, that organization would neither be "the church" nor would it have the power of the church. The difference would be in the enrichment that has come through the lives of those who have contributed to it. The church is the "Life of Ages, richly poured." It is the embodiment of Christ, of all that his life and sacrifice mean. The church is the embodiment of the nameless saints who endured hardship for their faith. The church contains the simplicity and the love given it by St. Francis of Assisi. The church has the rugged honesty and integrity of Martin Luther. The church embodies the intense devotion of John Henry Newman. It is indeed the Life of Ages richly poured, and when we join the Union Memorial Church of Glenbrook, the First Christian Church of Louisville, or the First Universalist Church of Quincy, we are not joining a local improvement society, but are becoming one with a great tradition that its goodly heritage may make us rich and strong to do the tasks of this day in the same spirit that others have done it in theirs. We ought to know something about Augustine, St. Francis, Martin Luther, Cardinal Newman, John Woolman and others, for they influence us through our heritage.

THE BIBLE STILL A BOOK OF LIFE

The second aspect of that heritage is scripture—the Bible.

I honestly believe that it is impossible to face the modern world with any breadth of vision or religious perspective without a constant reading of the Bible. By reading the Bible I do not mean beginning at the first verse of Genesis and continuing on through to the last verse of Revelation, but the reading of great passages and the study with a devotional outline.

We need to begin our days with the strength which comes from such familiar words as, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

People should learn what intelligent students now believe about the Bible, for there would thus be open to them—free from prejudices that arise from blind reading—the inspiration of the highest spiritual insights that have come to man. We need to be rebuked for our transgressions, we need to be brought back to a compelling standard of righteousness, we need our vision sent ahead into the far country, and we need our minds centered on those truths that outlast all shifts of time.

We need very sorely a modern and intelligent and loving reading of the treasures of the English Bible.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL

The third aspect of our heritage is the gospel of Christ.

The word "gospel" means "good news." But the story of Christ is no longer "news": it is 1900 years old. When we hear of an earthquake or other catastrophe we are interested because we did not know of it before. But when the preacher tells us that Jesus proclaimed that we must love our enemies, that we must overcome evil with good, that we must go the second mile, that in this universe there is a heavenly father who is like a good shepherd—when we hear all that we reply that it is old doctrine we have heard since childhood.

Yet the Christian gospel is good *news!* It is old because we have heard it preached before, but it is new in that we have not yet lived it. It is new in that men are beginning to suspect that the teachings of Jesus

are, after all, the most practical and helpful way of life for individuals and for nations.

The church has no startling or novel solution. It offers at this critical time a goodly heritage in the belief that it is that rich past made alive and vital that will bring a lost radiance to hearts today.

Mary Ellen Chase tells in her book *Dawn in Lyonesse* the story of a waitress in a hotel on the coast of Cornwall, England, whose life was dull and drab and severe until an American professor staying at that hotel put into her hands the story of Tristram and Isolt. From this story the girl learns that the very place where she works is the place where centuries before a great love story was lived out. With this realization life is changed, and the past becomes real. When a friend complains that Cornwall is an old place, she replies: "It is old. That's quite right. An' yet it's new. I don't rightly know how to explain it. The old things there, they make people new once they learn about them."

It is the old, old story of Jesus and his love that will make people new once they learn about it—learn about it not with their eyes and ears, but with their hearts.

The church must live its heritage!

What Is a Christian?

By Arthur T. Bailey

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11:26.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Acts 26:28.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. I Peter 4:16.

A GROUP of young people in a small church became involved one Sunday in a serious question. "What is a Christian?" asked one of the group. This precipitated a real debate.

That question will bring about a discussion in almost any average group of people, for there are some who suppose that the essence of Christianity resides in something which begins outwardly and objectively, rather than something which grows up inwardly and subjectively.

A minister talks almost every day with men and women who, much like the rich young ruler, say: "All the commandments have I kept. After all, that is most important, is it not?" Or, referring to another person one may say: "He always goes to church. He keeps his pledge paid up, and that's the important thing, isn't it?" Or a third man whom we invite to church says: "I believe that a man should treat his fellow man rightly and honestly. I have never deprived any man unjustly. That is my idea of being a Christian." Then he adds, "That is better than some folks I know who are in church every Sunday." A minister's ears ache from day to day, for he hears such things frequently. On the whole these are high moral ideas, but they are results rather than causes; their origin is outward rather than inward. But the true content of Christianity is basically a faith. These works will follow, of course, but necessarily a faith must precede. "By faith a man is justified and not only by works."

Simply and broadly expressed, the Christian is one who believes in Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Or again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Such belief implies that the believer will seek to live as Christ lived. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," said the Master. To learn what characteristics shall belong to the Christian, one may turn to the New Testament where we discover that the term "Christian" is used only three times—twice in the Acts of the Apostles, and once in Peter's first epistle—as seen in the texts above.

It is interesting to note a grammatical fact. Each time the term "Christian" is used in the New Testament, it is used as a noun and never as an adjective. Someone has explained the significance of this fact. A "Christian America" would mean that all Americans are Christians, and they are not. A "Christian church" would mean that all church members are Christians, but unfortunately some are merely nominal Christians. A "Christian school" would mean that the personnel and the methods of that school in its every department would be Christlike—an ideal hardly attained by any institution of learning. While this thought expresses a rather extreme point of view, we may well be aware of this scriptural usage of the term.

Each of our three texts shows forth the true life and character of the Christian.

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The true believer in Christ is associative. He desires to commune with others who believe as he does. The early years of the first century were years of peril to the believers in Christ. After the martyrdom of Stephen, a great flood of persecution swept Jerusalem. The Christians scattered over a wide area seeking safety. Some had fled to the notably heathen city of Antioch. There they had been blessed in their preaching and teaching of Christ, both to Jew and Gentile. One day Barnabas came by and was challenged by the evidence of a great opportunity. He persuaded the Apostle Paul to labor with him, and for a year they jointly conducted many meetings and carried on a great ministry. After recording these facts, Luke continues, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

It is true that the term "Christian," when first used, was suggestive of contempt and even of hatred. Through set teeth, the heathen populace sneered, "Christian!" But the use of that term at this time suggests that the size of the worshiping groups was becoming noticeable and evident, and that the power of these groups was beginning to be felt in that city!

This associative characteristic in the early church, as well as that in the modern church, was absolutely essential. Public worship must ever be central in our faith.

Men may go to church for various and sundry reasons: some for sincere and uplifting worship; others for social contacts and values; a few for purely business reasons, perhaps. The *Reader's Digest* of a few months ago recorded a most unusual reason for church attendance. A man was frequently seen on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum in the morning when an attendant came to open the doors. The man was unshaven but well dressed. Each time, after the attendant had opened the door, the man would enter the building, seat himself on a bench in one of the galleries, pull out of his pocket the *New York Times,* and proceed to read. After this had occurred several times, curiosity finally mastered the attendant; so he asked the man one day why he followed this rather unusual procedure. "Oh, that is easily explained," he said. "You see, I am trying to give up smoking, so when it is most difficult, in the morning, I go where I can't smoke. On Sundays when you are closed, I go to church!"

Look, for a moment, at the life of Jesus. He is seen constantly in the midst of his little company of believers. He felt the need of their fellowship and association. This was vividly illustrated in the crucial hour of his life, when he went out to the Garden of Gethsemane. Leaving Peter, James and John a little distance away, he went alone to pray. Returning, he found them sleeping, and said, "Couldst thou not watch one hour?" A second time he returned to find them sleeping, and even a third. Then he was delivered up through his betrayal. How much he needed these men in that hour of crisis! If Jesus felt that need, how much more must we!

Sometimes a preacher is asked this question: "Can a man be a Christian and not go to church? Now, I know . . ." and he goes on to tell of an honest and upright man who never goes to church, but he is "as good a Christian as anybody." In answering, we would raise a second question: "If a man be earnestly Christian, how can he but go to church?" When a seed is planted in the ground and it receives rain and warmth, it grows up because that is its essential nature. When the seed of the spirit is planted in a human soul, and when it is nurtured by prayer and meditation, it seeks the fellowship of others. Then one goes to church not because he must, or even because it is his duty; he goes because he cannot do otherwise. He is driven by a powerful inner desire.

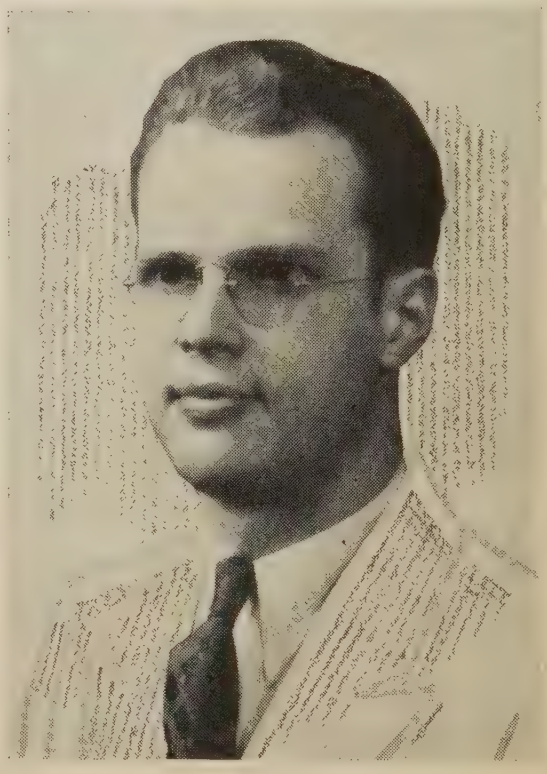
Certainly, the Christian must always be associative.

II

The true believer in Christ is not only associative, he is also contagious. He radiates the joy and enthusiasm which pervade his soul.

This contagion is suggested in one of the most dramatic scenes of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul was brought before King Agrippa on trial for his life. Festus had said that he could see "nothing worthy of death in this man." Then Agrippa bade Paul make his defense. In a masterful manner he described the purpose of Christ's coming. He reviewed briefly the great turning point in his own life down there upon the Damascus road, declaring: "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." When he had finished, Festus burst forth: "Much learning, O Paul, hath made thee mad." Paul turned easily toward Festus. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, . . . for the king knoweth of these things before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him. . . . King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Then it was Agrippa's turn. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Some have reminded us that the king may have been merely jesting with Paul in these words, but one can



Arthur T. Bailey

hardly question that he had been caught by the magnetism and the enthusiasm of this follower of Jesus. The spirit of Christ poured forth from this man as it has from every soul which has been completely surrendered to him.

When Christ truly enters a human heart, that one wants to share with others the joy which he has found. Out of this spirit and this characteristic has come one of the greatest units of church life and effort, the missionary program. Missions are, simply stated, an instrumentality through which the contagious spirit of Jesus is carried on.

The Presbyterian Church recently celebrated the centennial anniversary of its Foreign Board. We were reminded of such men and women as Dr. Lowrie and his wife, and Dr. and Mrs. Reid. In less than two years after their departure for India, two of this noble quartette, Mr. Reid and Mrs. Lowrie, had "laid down their lives for their Friend," and Mrs. Reid had returned to this country. But the indomitable spirit of

Dr. Lowrie took him far into northwest India, where men had had none of the blessings of the Christian faith. He opened up that country beginning at Lodiana, where a Christian missionary had never been before. How did he accomplish such wonders? By the contagion of a great Christian soul.

In 1859 Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn went out to Japan, not long after Perry had opened Japanese ports to foreign trade. But a hard task confronted these servants of Christ. "At street corners, in cities, on country roads and in mountain passes were great bulletin boards proclaiming belief in Christ a crime punishable by death." Bitter strife and hateful opposition faced the Christians. Someone has testified that so dangerous a subject was Christianity that the natives, at the mere mention of that subject, would put their hands to their throats in terror. The people were taught by their government to believe that the Christian missionaries had come to corrupt their morals. Logically, progress in such an environment was very slow until there was a complete change in government. But these missionaries were undaunted. Their patient, persistent winning of confidence finally bore fruit because of the Christlike character of both Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn—both of whom, by merely living, radiated Christ.

Jesus said: "I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men unto me." This was true in the first century; it is equally true in the twentieth century.

Some months ago, Dr. L. Myron Boozer, dean of men at Coe College, passed away. His was a great spirit and his influence among young people was boundless. Dr. Gage, president of the school, in a memorial statement, said: "The love of God shining forth from one's life is power, and the cause of great joy to all around. . . . A Christlike man with boys and girls on the campus is the answer to the problem of Christian education." His faith shone!

III

Finally, the true believer in Christ must be courageous. The Christian life cannot be lived free of suffering. Suffering, in turn, requires courage.

In his first epistle, Peter exhorts his readers thus: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's affairs, yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this behalf."

How appropriate are those words for such a day as this! "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." How much we dislike even the suggestion of suffering, yet it comes to all who believe. The faith of Christ is being challenged today as it has not been for decades. The church is facing what, some men say, may finally become a life-or-death struggle. Already the pressure of the totalitarian state abroad has curbed the spiritual freedom of many Christians there. The Christian in prison for being a servant of God rather than of the state is indeed a modern picture. Many are saying to us who are young in the ministry: "You must 'soft-pedal' your older religious ideas; you must rationalize a bit; you must compromise some of those moth-eaten doctrines!" To stand firm against these cancerous temptations in such a day will cost us popularity, prestige, and perhaps finally, liberty. However, we recall happily the words of Jesus in which he said: "If therefore the son of man make you free, ye shall be free indeed." This is a freedom which is born out of suffering.

William Chalmers Covert once wrote an article about a young preacher of the New Testament, Apollos of Alexandria. He faced a world strikingly similar to that which we face today, a world which was dominated by a passion for money-making; was passing through a social disorder and mental confusion which are characteristics of a changing era; and was ruled by a "cultural sophistication" resulting in a spirit of indifference to ethics and an intellectual dislike for spiritual matters. This young minister faced his problems bravely, and of him the Scriptures say: "He taught diligently the things of the Lord . . . he mightily convinced the Jews, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." This suggests courage, a courage which is not less needed in our day than in his. It requires courage to proclaim the unsearchable riches of God through Jesus Christ, whether from pulpit or from pew.

What courage was evidenced by the Apostle Paul himself, when, after his great experience on the Damascus road, he went at once to minister alongside the people whom he had previously persecuted, and he sought to save those with whom he had formerly carried on his persecutions. It is not an easy thing to return to the environment of the old crowd when a new gospel beats within the heart.

It is recorded of "Billy" Sunday that at the time of his conversion he was playing ball with the White Stockings of the National League. Some great ball players performed on the same diamond with him. Sunday was won to Christ at an evening meeting. The next afternoon he was scheduled to report for practice at the ball park. But he knew that his fellow players had learned of his stand. They were not believers. How he wanted to escape that practice, for surely they would taunt him for his stand! But duty demanded and he went. "I shall never forget it!" he writes. "I slipped my key into the wicket, and the first to meet me after I got inside was Mike Kelley. He came up, and in a most cordial and kindly manner said: 'Bill, I'm proud of you. Religion ain't my long suit, but I'll help you all I can.' Up came Anson, the best ball player in the game . . . There wasn't a fellow in that team who knocked; but everyone had a word of encouragement for me."

It requires courage to live a Christlike life among one's fellows!

Yes, certainly the Christian is courageous; he must be, for suffering and discouragement will surely come his way.

We began by asking a question, "What is a Christian?" That is not the proper question now. It is rather, "Am I a Christian?" Only two voices in all of life can answer that query for me: one is the still small voice of God; the other, the voice of my own soul.

Feeding the Fires

By Donald B. Blackstone

While I was musing, the fire burned. Psalm 39:3.

IT WOULD be difficult to find a phrase more potent with meaning for our times and ourselves than these simple words from the lips of an humble soul in an ancient day: "While I was musing, the fire burned."

The picture that naturally flashes into one's mind as one hears the testimony, "While I was musing, the fire burned," is that of one sitting by an open fire in the evening. In the darkness, lightened only by the reddened glow of the hot coals and the darting yellow and blue-tongued flames, there is a strange fascination that takes possession of one. Under the spell of it, what man or woman will not plumb his soul and bring out of the recesses of it truths about himself and his life that he has never before admitted! It is as if in that holy moment one were face to face with eternity!

How precious can be those moments before the fire! What plans, courage, ideal, hope, vision and faith have their birth there! Many a young man has determined his destiny before a flickering fire. Some long looks at life are had through glowing coals, as many of us can testify. Many a man's house was built there in fancy before it was built elsewhere in fact. By many a fireside, mothers and fathers have planned the future of their children while they were still in their arms. Many a battle with one's own soul has been fought by some figurative fireside, and out of the struggle has come many a new beginning. Without firesides, in fact and figure, before which one can sit musing, how much of what we might become never can be!

WHAT THIS GENERATION NEEDS

If someone is saying, "This is all very well, but few of us have the opportunity to take those long inspiring looks into the unknown before some open fire. Much as we would like to avail ourselves of that luxury, the demands of a working world are upon us." The answer to that is that one does not need to look outside one to find a fireside. Everyone has an eternal fire that burns on the hearth of his soul, and if he will feed that fire, it will light and warm his life and afford him opportunity to take those long, long looks into the great beyond toward which each one of us is irresistibly moving.

It seems almost unnecessary to say that there is nothing this generation so pitifully needs as an eternal fire burning on the hearth of its soul. Our generation has many things, but there is one thing that it does not have, and that is fire. It has plenty of smoldering ember and cold ashes, but not fire.

In the first place, the fire of rebellion is going out of us. Our generation tends to rebel against nothing. It meekly opens its mouth and receives whatever spoonfuls of bitter medicine any rampant and boisterous quack wants to give it. I mean by that that it will not rebel against any destructive or deteriorating trend in its own life or the life of its community. Few of us crusade against liquor, or gambling, or crime, or graft, or greed, or immorality, or injustice. Why not? No one can think that any of these things are a boon to humanity. We know better. Why do we so calmly endure them? The answer is that the fire of rebellion has gone out of us, and we are like so many leaves blown hither and yon by the wind. We know, too, what our irreligion is doing to us and to our times. Of course, that is one reason why the fire of rebellion has gone out of us. The disciplines and devotions of a religious life have lost their hold upon us, and so we have nothing to fight for or with.

In the second place, many of us have lost our fire of

Donald B. Blackstone

personal idealism. I mean by that, that many of us are not now striving toward any high goals of personal or social living. There was a time when many of us had much higher moral, social, intellectual and spiritual standards than we have today, but somehow they have escaped us or we have deserted them. What a refreshing experience it is in these days to come upon one who proves to us that one can still live in this world and have an indomitable passion for the good life, for a great church and a Christian world, and keep both his sanity and his cheerfulness! What the Christian church could do if its people had the fire of personal and social idealism burning in their souls, as far as our times are concerned, is not a matter of observation but speculation.

THE PASSING OF HONOR

In the third place, the fires of loyalty and honor have gone out of many in this generation. If anyone doubts that, let him ask himself how great his loyalty is to his

best self, to his friends, his home, his parents, his employers, his church, his community and his God. You know the answer as well as I. Most of us carry no crosses for a suffering Christ.

But there is a more tragic loss than all these. Some of us have lost the fire of our faith in Christ as our Savior, in God as our Father and in his kingdom of rightness and goodness and love on this earth. When we lose that, we lose almost everything in this world that is worth living for. There are many battles in this world that cannot be won unless faith fights them. Life desperately needs the fire of faithfulness and cheerfulness to warm it. Without these, how cold and unfeeling life becomes!

It seems highly improbable that anyone wants the fire to go out of his life. It is more hopeful to believe that this tragedy has come upon us unawares, and that we earnestly desire to regain our spiritual fire. How can one feed the fires of his soul?

The psalmist had the fire burning in his soul. Consider his testimony: "While I was musing, the fire burned." So, fire came to him in his thoughtful moments. While he was meditating, pondering, studying, reflecting, he was conscious of the fire burning in his soul. Perhaps there is a suggestion of our difficulty. Meditation, study, reflection—these are comparatively unfamiliar activities to us.

GADGETS OR SOULS?

Perhaps someone objects: "But we think of many things; look at the achievements of our generation." Look at our marvelous buildings, bridges, machines, gadgets and compounds. All right, let us look at them and admire them, but let us also look at our unemployment, our poverty, our crime, our juvenile delinquency, our gambling manias, our habits of intoxication, our broken homes, our crowded prisons and our packed insane asylums, then answer this question: "Which is better, to build buildings, machines and gadgets, or fine manhood and womanhood, enduring homes and stalwart citizens?"

I am thinking about the achievements of this generation when I say that it is too often thoughtless and it has certainly lost much of its spiritual fire so that it does not fight to preserve the things that need preserving.

But consider what the psalmist was musing about that stirred the fires within him. He was meditating upon mankind's supreme questions: "How can one get the most out of his life? What can one do with his life that will be good and of lasting value and supremely rewarding?" I presume that, on the way, he passed by several conclusions. One of them must have been a consideration of the values in doing evil. The only conclusion to which he could have come is that evil is neither good, lasting nor rewarding. He must also have considered wastefulness as a philosophy, but rejected it for similar reasons. He seems to have been appalled with this futility of so much living. Who isn't appalled with that? Life is the most precious possession that anyone can have. One ought to guard it with his best thought, with the greatest care, and devote it to some supreme good.

The conclusion to which the psalmist came, he stated in these words: "And now Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions, make me not the reproach of the foolish." After having carefully considered the whole matter of life, and having come to a satisfactory conclusion, who could not feel the fire burning in his soul! Of one thing I am sure, no one will ever feed the fire on the hearth of his soul until he does ask himself in some solemn moment, "What can I do to make the most of my portion of life?" Until one decides that, he is wasting time and breath.

WANTED—THINKING PLUS

Finally, consider what happened. "While I was musing, the fire burned—then I opened my mouth and spoke." Would that more of us would not speak until we had thought and felt. Thinking, by itself, is of little value. Feeling, by itself, is positively dangerous. But take a profoundly thoughtful mind, use it to feed the fires of the spirit, and then turn it loose in the world and you begin to understand what Jesus meant when he said of men, "Ye are the light of the world," and you also catch a glimpse of the source of his power.

May each one of us find some quiet place each day, where he can be alone with God. May each one of us find a warm and inspiring and cheerful place before the fire of his own soul. As each one of us sits by the hearth may we feed the fire of the spirit with the fuel of thoughtfulness, and blow upon it with the breath of life, that we may have within us a great fire, that shall warm us and sustain us and cheer us so that we can do something for a dull, cold and dreary world.

A Favorite New Year Poem

PERHAPS the most frequently quoted poem on the New Year theme is the one entitled "A New Leaf." The poem has frequently been credited to Kathleen Wheeler, but it is from the pen of Carrie Shaw Rice, and first appeared in her volume *In Childhood Straying,* published in Tacoma, Wash., in 1895 by Vaughn & Morrill Company. At that time the author was supervisor in the Normal Training Department of the Tacoma public schools. She was engaged in educational work for over fifty years. She died in Tacoma in 1926. Here is her poem:

He came to my desk with quivering lip—
The lesson was done.
"Dear Teacher, I want a new leaf," he said,
"I have spoiled this one."
I took the old leaf, stained and blotted,
And gave him a new one all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled,
"Do better, now, my child."

I went to the throne with a quivering soul—
The old year was done.
"Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me?
I have spoiled this one."
He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,
And gave me a new one all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled,
"Do better, now, my child."

'The Windowsill of Heaven'

By Theodore F. Adams

In the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. Mark 11:35.

On a summer Sunday afternoon some years ago I attended an outdoor vesper service in a small Wisconsin town. It was a beautiful day and we gathered in the shade of some old maples for a union service conducted by the local Episcopal rector. Together we sang the great hymns of the church, joined in the prayers and listened to the sermon. As we left each of us was handed a card. I have long since lost mine, but I carry it still in my mind. It bore a picture of Jesus kneeling by a great rock in the wilderness. The trees about him seemed to join in worship as he prayed alone with his Father. Beneath the picture was this verse:

Every morning lean thine arms awhile
Upon the windowsill of heaven
And gaze upon thy Lord,
Then, with the vision in thy heart,
Turn strong to meet thy day.

"The windowsill of heaven." Here is a poet's description of the reality of prayer. His, however, is an enlarged concept of prayer; not that of the little boy who explained to the visiting minister that he didn't say his prayers every night because "some nights I don't want anything."

IT IS WISE TO PRAY

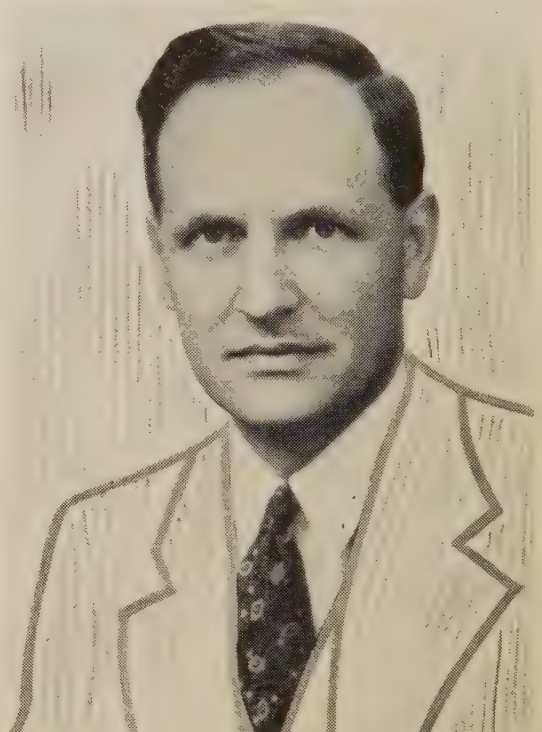
Many of us are guilty of such a limited view of prayer. We feel our own lack of spiritual power. We are troubled by weakness, doubt and failure, largely because we miss much of the help that prayer might give us. We need to say with the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray." They needed to learn not only to pray, but how to pray. How well Jesus knew is revealed in our text. The Master had just finished a hard, grueling day. Another awaited him. How could he be ready for it? Mark gives us the answer and with it a key to Jesus' power: "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

Our little verse also suggests the wisdom of prayer. "Every morning lean thine arms awhile upon the windowsill of heaven." Prayer is a part of human experience, however men attempt to define it. "Prayer is the act by which man definitely tries to relate his soul and life to God." "Prayer is a cumulative life of friendship with God."

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

No matter how we try to picture or explain it, prayer is a real and vital factor in the life of the Christian. William James tells us, "We pray because we cannot help praying." Carlyle says, "Prayer is and remains the native and deepest impulse of the souls of men."

One summer morning in North Carolina I was awakened before dawn and with a group of young people climbed to the top of a near-by mountain. There we sat waiting, singing hymns, watching the rim of the earth in the east made by a range of hills. Suddenly all were silent. We saw what we had been waiting for. The ball of fire that was the sun slowly crept into view above that distant rim of earth. It was a time for prayer. We were at the windowsill of heaven experiencing anew the reality of which our poet speaks, "And



Theodore F. Adams

gaze upon thy Lord." Prayer can and does bring a daily revelation of God to man. As you pray you know that God is there. You see him with the eyes of the soul, you hear "the still small voice" within. The fact of communion with God is the great reality of true prayer.

WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS

When we pray something happens. "The vision in thy heart" comes as one result of prayer. How much that vision can mean! It was said of the disciples long ago that men "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." What an effect it has on us to pray and see our Lord as he is and ourselves as we are! We realize in that moment of vision that all is not as it should be. A simple experience will picture what I mean. You are working about the house in old clothes, fitting garments for the dusty, dirty work you are doing. The bell rings and company comes. You stand at the door before a visitor, freshly dressed. On the instant you become apologetic, you compare yourself with your guest. Clothing and dust, which a moment before

seemed all right, now are evidently out of place and a source of embarrassment as you see your self with new eyes.

Such is the vision and effect of prayer. We see ourselves as we are and as we ought to be. Humility, repentance, cleansing and resolve follow naturally. If prayer can do that, and it can, how much we all need to pray!

GAINING POWER THROUGH PRAYER

Something does happen during prayer and as a result you do "turn strong to meet thy day." Power comes as we see ourselves surrounded by God's love and wisdom and strength. The weakest, humblest life can be made stronger spiritually. The greatest life is weakened without the constant refreshing afforded by the resources of prayer. Each of us, as we pray, is fitted to meet our own day. It was Martin Luther who said, "I have so much to do today that I could not possibly get it done without spending two or three hours in prayer."

How strange, how foolish that we should be content with so little prayer! We need to pray more, we Christians. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," and many, many more could be wrought if we would pray more. A friend of mine, a Jewish rabbi, once said to me as we talked about the lack of power in the Christian church: "The trouble is that you Christians claim to have all the mechanics of salvation, but you don't act saved."

Contrast our own experience with that of Jesus. The incident related in our text was no unusual occurrence for him. He knew well "the windowsill of heaven." Jesus prayed and prayed often, for himself and for others. He took time for prayer before every great crisis of his life. He taught others to pray by precept and by example, for he knew from his own experience what it meant to talk with the Father.

How can we pray more effectively? I have been helped in my own thinking by some excellent suggestions of Dr. T. R. Glover as to the essentials of prayer in Jesus' mind. Let us always think of prayer as fellowship with God. Prayer is more than thanksgiving, petition, adoration and intercession. Those are parts and forms of prayer. Think of prayer as Jesus did as communion, conference, a personal realization of the very real presence of God. Sometimes when you pray, kneel down. It is not essential, but it does help to create the sense of humility and trust. Remember too that you can pray anywhere—in church, in the midst of the beauties of nature, in the stress of life—but that nothing can take the place of a moment alone with God in the morning and at night. Jesus knew the importance of this fellowship with God alone and he told his disciples: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy father who is in secret, and thy father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee."

As you pray, have faith in God. Believe that he can help, expect that he will help, realize that he has helped already. Believe and you will receive; in fact, you already have received much that prayer can give.

'THY WILL BE DONE'

In true prayer there is identification with the purpose of God. We pray "Thy will be done." We identify ourselves with the needs of those we love, or ought to; with the world's sin and misery; with the plans and program of God in Christ for the redemption of the world. We cannot pray only for ourselves when we say with Jesus, "Thy will be done."

Such praying leads us naturally to a new dedication of self to God. A very real part of true prayer is our surrender to his will and our trust in his ability to change and use us. As you pray you build your life on God. All he has is yours, all you are is his. You and the Father are one in purpose and resources.

Such was the experience of Jesus. See him on the cross. You marvel at his strength, at his forgiveness, his redeeming love. You can hardly understand it until you go back of the cross to a garden and a prayer and a Son at one with his Father.

Would you be like Jesus? Then pray, and

> Every morning lean thine arms awhile
> Upon the windowsill of heaven
> And gaze upon thy Lord.
> Then, with the vision in thy heart,
> Turn strong to meet thy day.

A Pastoral Prayer

By Everett W. Palmer

ETERNAL Shepherd of our souls, we have learned that Thy love overshadows and surrounds all our days. With reverence and gladness we offer our hearts for Thine enthronement, our wills as Thy servants. Save us from the stupidity which would allow us to be blind to Thy majesty, deaf to Thy voice, indifferent to Thy purpose.

Creative Spirit, what a great and good world Thou dost share with men! We marvel at the silent splendor of sky and sea, the speechless beauty of hills and trees, the rugged grandeur of plains and mountains. We wonder at the creative skill and strength of our fellows. What miracles they have wrought upon the earth! But when Thou dost see our bombed cities and our battlefields, when Thou dost behold our city slums and desecrated prairie lands, when Thou dost look upon our starving children, what dost Thou think of us? O God of justice and mercy, forgive our ignorance and sin. Teach us the wisdom of righteousness.

As we walk the common road of our humanity enable us to trace the footprints of Jesus and to see his Face. We would be constrained by Thy love. We would see the world as our parish. We would be living witnesses for brotherhood, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

A Full Program on a Flat Pocketbook

By William J. DuBourdieu

FIVE men sat around a table, planning the pastors' section of a national religious gathering. One "headline" address, it was agreed, should be on the subject of an adequate church program. Then arose the question, whom to secure for such a discourse. The desired speaker was to be from a church which conducted a fully rounded ministry without the aid of a professional staff. The choice was made difficult, not because there was a dearth of successful clergymen, but because every church which the five thought of as operating a noteworthy program employed a corps of salaried workers. One clergyman, renowned for the scope of what his church does, was reported to have a paid staff of over fifty persons.

Possibly each one of the five about that table was pastor of a congregation filling these requirements but was too modest to speak up. One cannot say, for none of the group mentioned his own work. In view of that discussion, however, I wonder if I may not have an experience which is of interest.

● *From City to Village*

Before the depression I was pastor of a Chicago church which, in addition to minister and janitor, regularly employed three other full-time workers and enough part-time workers to give us an average staff of ten or a dozen. Then one day a contractor, going over the building to give an estimate on contemplated improvements, discovered that the roof supports were dry-rotted and the city closed the plant on us that night. I am now pastor of a village church, still feeling the depression. And yet here, in Harvard, Illinois, without money to hire a paid staff, we operate just as vital a program, in my estimation, as that of my former charge.

I know scores of churches which are up on their toes and doing a thorough piece of work. Most churches of my acquaintance fall into this category, I believe. But if there is an interest in hearing how a minister with a sizable staff would operate were he without paid assistants, my tale may be worth telling.

Of course, the program of the two fields is not the same. In our section of Chicago, with streets thundering from trucks, there was no safe play spot for our children unless we provided it, and this we attempted to do, keeping the church plant open all day and well into the evening. In our present small city, backyards are green lawns and consequently there is no need of a seven-day-a-week schedule. We do, however, operate two play groups, boys and girls meeting on alternate weeks, a Scout meeting for older boys, and a variety of less conventional weekday activities.

In Chicago, in addition to seeking to provide a safe, wholesome environment, we worked on the conviction

William J. DuBourdieu

that wise leaders would recognize the character defects of their charges and help them overcome these weaknesses. In some individual cases this was done most successfully, but generally play and class periods rarely advanced beyond the clean-speech and good-sportsmanship stage.

● *Cultivating Amateur Leadership*

These values seemed to be secured just as successfully under amateur leadership as professional—in fact, meeting with a sponsor in a church building seems to regulate the speech problem almost automatically. The trained worker usually was superior in solving squabbles of the basketball floor, but very rarely did his concept of character training take him beyond the policeman type of role. Realizing the limited results that come from many children's play programs, at Harvard we have sought two ends only in our one-day-a-week play schedule: to give the pastor an opportunity to know his children through intimate association with them and to identify for them the thought of church with that of a "good time."

But, while our children's weekday program has been greatly curtailed in moving it to our small city, our religious activities are vastly superior to what many a paid staff offers. The explanation, oddly enough, seems to be that the presence of a paid staff appears to defeat its own end by building up a state of mind which discourages the development of a large group of lay workers. A let-George-do-it psychosis seems to develop in churches with numerous employees. In Chicago we had a dozen paid workers, a dozen loyal officials, and a dozen consecrated volunteer leaders; here in Harvard one-quarter of our almost five hundred members hold regular church jobs—and not counted in this group is the large number of persons who work in the kitchen or do other manual labor whenever something special creates the need.

● *The Junior Church*

One illustration of how losing a paid staff may produce volunteer leaders can be found in the story of our Harvard junior church. This activity was started and most competently operated by a seminary student, who in pre-depression days was paid a fairly substantial remuneration. Then he was given an opportunity to preach to an adult congregation and resigned. Also, depression had begun to whittle down church income, so it was felt wise not to hire a successor. Today fourteen people are engaged in operating our junior church, whereas formerly it was a one-man responsibility carried on with the aid of two assistants. If we may judge from the interest and attendance of the children, these volunteers do their task just as ably as did the paid seminary student.

Probably one of the secrets of holding a large corps of lay workers is subdivision of labor, so that the task assigned each person is not overonerous. In our junior church or church-hour kindergarten for example, leaders are divided into four monthly groups; each person is on duty one month and free three. To serve Sunday after Sunday would be too exacting a task, but this way everyone asked to assume leadership had been able to afford the time.

Indeed, we go even further in making the task easy. We expect leaders to be present in the junior church only during the time of their immediate responsibility. Thus the junior church preacher attends the adult service up

o the singing of the hymn which pre-edes the sermon and only then goes ownstairs to give his talk; conse-uently neither he nor any other junior hurch worker is entirely deprived of articipation in the adult service.

● *Classification by Age and Interest*

In Harvard, first we classified our eople according to age or interest nd then we sought to build up the ype of program which each group eeds. For example, our community is ie trading center of a compact farm rea. Once open-country churches sur-ounded our city but today not a ingle one is in existence. With the emise of these open-country churches, ural church attendance began to wane lso. In an effort to meet this situa-ion my predecessor started a Farm-rs' Fellowship, as he named it. Rural esponse to this was immediate. It iet a spiritual need of which many armers were very conscious. In the ords of a charter member, the Fel-owship became the farmers' church.

But we observed that country chil-ren were not receiving the religious raining they deserved. The Fellow-hip was an after-chore weeknight neeting, which meant that the younger hildren were left at home in bed; on unday it was only an exceptional amily that brought the youngsters nto the church's services. The result vas an almost total absence of reli-ious training for rural youth. To emedy this, town men were persuaded o band together in groups of four, ach to take a Sunday a month and rive out into the country to collect arm children for church and Sunday chool. In this way some nine routes iave been set in operation. Not only ias rural youth been benefitted but arents, who soon began taking turns ringing their offspring to church, have earned that they too can attend Sun-lay worship, despite their chores.

● *A Varied Ministry*

In similar fashion we have sought o minister to every local spiritual ieed. For children we have not only he activities mentioned previously, but weekday religious instruction in the ublic school, a daily vacation church chool, and a Sunday church school vhere all classes from the junior de-artment up use bound textbooks em-racing a year's work and where eachers study to make themselves pecialists in the field assigned them.

We felt the need of a men's social roup. Former experience told us that a supper-table meeting was most at-ractive. But the record of many hurches added a footnote that such roups were easy to start and hard to naintain. Accordingly, we decided to ind duties for our men's club before tarting it; our theory was that to stay live it must have a vital reason for continuing existence. At this time our rural routes were also in the planning stage. We married the two and now each keeps the other functioning.

One of the tasks, hardest of fulfillment for my Chicago staff, was visiting. Theoretically, paid employees were to follow up their activity contacts with calls in the home. Some way our family workers seemed to be the only ones to make good on this expectation. Here in Harvard we notice that similarly most visiting is left to the pastor, but there is one interesting exception. That is our district contact system.

● *'Bishops' as Section Leaders*

We have divided our community into small sections and put a woman in charge of each. For lack of a better term we have developed the habit of terming these overseers "bishops." Their duty is not making social calls but acting as mouthpiece or as messengers of the church. When our forty-page quarterly magazines are mimeographed, our "bishops" deliver them to the homes. When one of our "church-night" family dinners is to be held, they learn the number which will attend from each home.

We strive to see that too many requests are not made of these good folks at any one time, feeling that a good thing may be overdone; consequently the faithfulness of their performance has been excellent. One constant source of surprise to me is the joyousness of their greeting each time I come around with a new assignment. It seems that someone should be resentful at such a succession of tasks, but if so, no one has manifested it.

● *Organizing Women and Young People*

Two fields of activity have not been touched upon—women and young people. The women not only look after themselves but supply much of the leadership for the rest of the church. In Harvard we have done one thing of interest in this field. Five clubs existed for church women. One, the Missionary Society, embraced all the women of the congregation; the others were built on social or interest lines and consequently had a membership which did not overlap too much. There was in addition, however, a considerable body of women who did not desire membership in any weekday organization. Because the church program functions considerably through the church's societies, these non-club women were apt to be left untouched in various projects. To prevent this they have been treated as if they were a separate organization; certain of their number have been asked to direct their activities and duties have been assigned. Thus, one of the "church-family" dinners of last year was put on by the "neutrals," as these non-club women are called. Similarly, the Missionary Society, which has been organized into circles, treats this "neutral" grouping as a club.

In young people's work an excellent Sunday schedule is in operation, but weekday activities are not at all what the situation demands. For the young people's Sunday evening gathering the very superior Sigma Sigma Chi program originated by Rev. James Benson of Rockford is in use. But to date weekdays offer only a basketball league in winter, a fortnightly swim in summer, and a service project of taking library books to hospital patients. With liquor merchants operating all the loafing spots of town and country, a wholesome clubroom is urgently needed. Much time has been spent advocating this need but to date nothing has come to fruition.

● *Handicaps in the Small Community*

Certain difficulties characteristic of a small community are: that a single church does not have enough young people to guarantee success in such a venture, that nominally unchurched youth are too few to help greatly, and that urging youth of other churches to participate might result in considerable ill will. Getting Protestant churches to combine in such an enterprise sounds logical, but it is slow work. In all the contrasts between city and village church this is the one respect in which the city program is outstandingly superior. Here is one problem which apparently requires equipment and money if it is to be solved.

Possibly some of the contrasts made between my two charges seem to disparage the work of my Chicago field. If so, let me correct any such misapprehension. Our program in Chicago was an earnest effort to grapple with real city difficulties and much was accomplished by it. It enjoyed enough repute for me, as pastor, to be invited to conduct classes on "The City Church," two years traveling as far as Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, to lecture on this subject at the Baltimore Synod there.

● *No Eulogy of Poverty*

Possibly this article sounds like a eulogy of poverty. Such is not intended to be the case. Money enough to give a pastor stenographic help multiplies his usefulness greatly; wise staff members and clever publicity *can* greatly multiply any lay services; there is much that no church can do until the pastor is relieved of some of his duties. All these things are self-evident facts. But this remains: volunteer labor can project much the same activities which the more wealthy church produces by means of a paid staff; an adequate church program can be promoted without paid specialists.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. HAROLD BOSLEY, *a graduate of* Nebraska Wesleyan University and of the University of Chicago (B.D. and Ph.D.), was for five years director of religious activities at Iowa State Teachers College and a teacher of philosophy and religion in that institution. Several months ago he was called to the pastorate of the Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church in Baltimore.

Rev. PAUL LEE STURGES *has been pastor* of the First Baptist Church, Pittsfield, Mass., since 1933. He holds a B.D. degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School, an A.M. from Brown University, and an A.B. from William-Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.

Rev. STANLEY I. STUBER *received his* B.D. degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1928. Awarded a graduate scholarship he continued his studies and was given a Th.M. degree by the seminary. For several years he ministered to the Baptist Church of Clifton Springs, N. Y., and about a year ago was made chaplain-consultant of the Clifton Springs Sanitarium. Mr. Stuber is a contributing editor of the *Twentieth Century Quarterly* and has recently been made co-editor of the *Minister,* Baptist magazine for preachers.

Rev. HOWARD J. CONN *was graduated* from Leland Stanford University in 1932 and the following year was San Francisco Harvard Club scholar to Harvard where he pursued graduate work in philosophy. In 1936 he received his B.D. degree from Yale Divinity School. Mr. Conn is a Congregationalist but is co-pastor of a nondenominational church, Union Memorial Church, Glenbrook, Conn.

Receiving his A.B. degree from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., Rev. ARTHUR T. BAILEY spent a year at Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago, then went to the Presbyterian Seminary in Omaha, where he was awarded a B.Th. degree in 1934. Following brief pastorates in Iowa he accepted a call to Grace Presbyterian Church, Beaver Dam, Wis., where he still ministers. Mr. Bailey's grandfather was for many years Synodical missionary in Iowa and his father, Rev. Arthur G. Bailey, is today pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Tracy, Minn.

Rev. DONALD B. BLACKSTONE *received* his academic training at the University of Michigan, Park College and Alma College. Upon his graduation from Auburn Seminary in 1936 he became pastor of the Church of the Covenant, Presbyterian, New York city.

About three years ago Rev. THEODORE F. ADAMS went to the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., one of the historic churches of that state. Earlier pastorates were in Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio. Mr. Adams has his A.B. degree from Denison University and his B.D. from Colgate Rochester. He is the son of a Baptist minister.

Rev. EVERETT W. PALMER *is minister* of the Trinity Methodist Church, Highland Park, N. J.

Rev. WILLIAM J. DUBOURDIEU *is pastor* of the First Presbyterian Church, Harvard, Ill.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

JOHN M. VERSTEEG, Walnut Hills-Avondale Methodist, Cincinnati, Ohio. "Too Many Gods for Comfort." Deut. 32:17—"New gods newly come up."

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa. "Christ and Napoleon." Matt. 11:11—"He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."

JOHN PITTS, Emmanuel Church (United Church of Canada), Montreal, Can. "Jesus Christ and Money." Matt. 6:24—"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Or "You cannot serve both God and money." (Twentieth Century New Testament.)

ELWOOD L. HAINES, Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville, Ky. "The Cure for Fear and Worry." Isa. 30:15, 18—"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. And ye would not. . . . Therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him."

WILLIAM EARL LARUE, Takoma Park Baptist, Washington, D. C. "The Interpretation of Duty." Rom. 15:27—"For the Gentile converts who have shared their spiritual blessings are in duty bound to minister to them in the things of this world." (Twentieth Century New Testament.)

WILLIAM F. HASTINGS, First Congregational, Ithaca, N. Y. "The Church as a Family." Rom. 12:10—"Have brotherly love toward one another like family affection." (Riverside.)

MILLARD J. GORDANIER, Methodist, Markesan, Wis. "The Glory of the Uncompelled." Luke 17:10—"When you do all you have been ordered to do, say, We are good-for-nothing slaves! We have done only what we ought to have done!" (Goodspeed.) Matt. 5:41—"And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two."

RICHARD K. ORR, Presbyterian, Rio, Ill. "Magnetic Religion." John 13:32—"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to myself."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

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Title of sermon

. . . . . .

Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .

Name of minister

. . . . . .

Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WE have been talking a good deal for more than a year about the World Council of Churches which is coming into being as the result of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences. But we must not forget that the churches of the United States and Canada are already united in a federal council. Our Federal Council had the most important meeting in its history at Buffalo, during the second week of December. Most important for two reasons: First, it is steadily growing more important in its own inherent functioning, and, secondly, its deliberation and actions were taken in the full consciousness of the awesome gravity of the world situation. The conviction has taken hold of everyone that, on the one hand, the Christian church is in peril, and on the other, that the church can be saved only by bearing witness to the faith which has been entrusted to it, with new vigor, far greater clarity, and under forms of visible unity. One more church joined the Federal Council—the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox church whose membership is mainly in a few great cities such as New York and Buffalo. This is the first of the so-called "catholic" (not Roman) churches to take membership. Dr. Mackay's committee report on "The State of the Church," was a penetrating and enlightening document. The evening sessions in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Church were profoundly impressive in both their worship and their messages. Special interest centered in the University Preaching Mission which has been conducted for a year, and now becomes a permanent project of the Council.

Biennial Meeting of The Federal Council

The Book of the Month

JESUS AND HIS CHURCH. *By R. Newton Flew. Abingdon Press. $2.00.*

IT is surprising how few people—and how few ministers—read books on the New Testament. Take that little book by C. H. Dodd, the Cambridge scholar, on *The Apostolic Preaching,* for example. I regard it as one of the most important and illuminating books that have appeared in a decade. I do not see how any preacher or Bible student can get along without it. Yet the publishers tell me they have sold less than 1,500 copies. Here is another book on the New Testament, also by a Cambridge scholar. I wish I could give it a big push into ten thousand pastors' libraries. It may be that my enthusiasm for it is partly derived from the fact that it confirms a thesis upon which I have been working for a long time. Some think I have been too extreme when I have said that the church *is* Christianity, and that Christianity cannot be defined except in terms of a living historical community. I do not claim that Dr. Flew commits himself to this thesis, but his interpretation of the mind of Jesus and of the whole New Testament has brought positive aid and comfort to me in my studies. "Jesus founded no church," it is frequently said. But Dr. Flew reaches the conclusion that, whether or not it is accurate to say that Jesus "founded" the church, all his teachings and acts had the church positively in view. With fascinating exegetical skill the author shows how the racial community of Israel passed into the super-racial community of the New Israel, and how the consciousness of the church as a living community chosen of God runs consistently through the whole New Testament.

A Thought for the Month

LAST month I called attention to the sensation saturated mentality of our generation. We live in the presence of so many exciting stimuli that we have little time to think at all except in terms of a routine adjustment of practical means to practical ends. Thus life tends to become mechanical, narrow, ego-centric and meaningless. Some there are who rise above this sensation level. They are our idealists. Their life is wider and higher than that of the unreflective multitude. They are unselfish and devoted. But many of our idealists have fallen victim to a view of life that is bounded by their own ideals. "I live for others," said a social worker. "And why do you live for others?" she was asked. "So they can live for others," was her reply. The nobility of this ideal must not be questioned. But it is living in a circle. After all, our ideals are just our human thoughts. And unless life transcends these thoughts, these ideals, and finds anchorage in something beyond them, above them, its destiny is not fulfilled. Christian faith is anchored in a reality that exists beyond our highest ideals. The good man, the idealist, needs the gospel no less than the sensation driven multitude. Religion spreads a sky over a man's life. It provides a motivation which human ideals cannot supply. It corrects and purifies and revises our ideals. It gives us access to the sources of power by which the good in our ideals may be realized. It kindles imagination and enriches our devotion to causes that are worthy. Moreover, it alone provides healing for us when our ideals betray us. Religion is living a *whole* life, in contrast to a fragmentary or a foreshortened life. To be a Christian is indeed to live for others, but faith adds a new dimension to our devotion. Read Paul. He, too, lived for others, but his devotion was fixed and sustained by his faith that these "others" are embraced in a love which is deeper than his own—the saving love of the great God whose children they all are.

Religion for The Idealist

Charles Clayton Morrison

3 things

needed for a great ministry

Every great ministry has behind it three kinds of knowledge. It may have other gifts as well, but these three are indispensable. They are—

1. *Knowledge of the Bible*
2. *Knowledge of the human heart*
3. *Knowledge of the world in which we are living*

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